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Post-Mortem on NIE 72-56:

Conditions and Trends in Tropical Africa,

dated 14 August 1956

I. Findings

1. Lack of detail in our information on opinions, attitudes and political associations of Africans in many territories makes it difficult to estimate the pace of change. The general statements to which we are confined may be valid without being useful in identifying the particular points at which trouble later develops. In evaluating the effects of rapid social change, we are particularly dependent on basic sociological and political research which is impossible for government officials to undertake and is proceeding in few places under private auspices with the scope and speed desired.

2. We lack sufficiently intimate knowledge of the intentions of native leaders, the pressures on them, and their evaluations of their positions. This deficiency is of great moment for many territories, particularly Nigeria and the Gold Coast.

3. In general, our intelligence on Tropical Africa requires bolstering with respect to (a) the opinions, attitudes, and aspirations of the native populations; (b) the extent of Communist influence; (c) political, social, and economic conditions and trends in the many territories rarely visited by American diplomatic or consular representatives; and (d) the relationships between territories, particularly how and to what degree developments in one area affect those in other areas. In addition, there is a serious lack of basic intelligence on conditions and trends in the rural areas of all territories in Tropical Africa. The following highlights major deficiencies by areas.

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